

contracted. The temperate countries, Argentina and Uruguay, were moreover an essential source of food for Britain, and the tropical republics at least highly desirable suppliers of North America.

Local Rivalries

But the South American scene is nothing so simple as a bare battlefield between rival imperialisms. Local states have their own quarrels, as complicated and fierce as those of any backblocks village. For example, Brazil and Argentina have fought over what is now Uruguay. Bolivia was deprived of a corridor to the Pacific, and Peru and Chile fought over the spoils. Paraguay and Bolivia fought just before this war an almost incredibly primitive and bloody series of campaigns for the Gran Chaco "desert."

The local contest which complicates current news is that between Brazil and Argentina for the leadership of the continent. It finds expression in Argentine talk about "when Brazil invades us"—meaning, as usual with such statements, "when we invade Brazil"; for all Argentina's wealth is her top soil, and "patriots" accordingly dream of a lightning amputation of the southern tip of their neighbour's enormous iron fields "to restore continental balance." It is this same jealousy that is behind Argentina's resentment against the United States' arming of Brazil—an unfriendly act "upsetting the continental balance,"

and they declare that is "bound to start a South American armaments race." The recent series of revolutions within Argentina's neighbours (successful in Bolivia, unsuccessful in Paraguay) are simply an attempt to swing the balance back by acquiring, through puppet regimes, control of the Bolivian metals which the Indian President Penaranda had promised to the United Nations. And here too we will find almost full explanation of the three revolutions within six months inside Argentina itself that have exasperated the Allied leaders and bewildered their publics.

David and Goliath

It will not give us of itself a true explanation, even upon the background already sketched, because one further element in South American affairs yet remains to be mentioned. This is the temper of the Argentine people which makes them a pastoral David searching round for the right stone to slay (or at least drive across the Carribean) the Goliath of the North. It is a clash between two "missions"—that of the U.S.A. to protect (and curb) her little Latin proteges, and that of Argentina to lead her Latin brothers. Materially speaking, the United States is of course overwhelmingly the stronger. But Argentina has on her side suspicions of the *Yanquis*, dating from American annexation of half Mexico, occupation of Cuba and Puerto Rico, and Marine policing

of Nicaragua, which Roosevelt's "Good Neighbour Policy" has not yet dissipated. Further, Buenos Aires, comparatively "white" and climatically energetic by South American standards, is indeed the publishing centre already of the world's extensive Spanish culture, and may claim, now that France and Italy are defeated states, to head the Latin countries. Finally Argentina is in popular feeling overwhelmingly Radical (i.e., Liberal), although ruled with only token elections since 1930 by military representatives of the landowning caste.

The South American news, and especially that from Argentina, reads so queerly at present, and is so impossible to understand in terms merely of Pro- and Anti-Axis, because all these criss-crossing strands of desire have woven a net to break out of which no politician has yet succeeded. Because Castillo's anti-American policy was depriving Argentina of the arms that Brazil was getting, Arturo Rawson threw him out last June. But when the United States weighed the reactionary composition of the new cabinet heavier than their pro-Allied words, their military comrade Ramirez had to throw them out in turn and "take steps" towards shutting the German Embassy. But the psychological necessity not to accept United States States "instruction" diverted these steps from reaching their goal. Then another

(continued on next page)

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